



TMDLS

Another Step to Cleaner Waters

*A fact sheet of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts,
Executive Office of Environmental Affairs,
Department of Environmental Protection,
Bureau of Resource Protection, Watershed Planning/Outreach Services*

Point and nonpoint pollution

Pollution comes from human-made and natural sources, such as industry, wastewater treatment facilities, stormwater and agricultural runoff, nutrients and solids from eroding soils, and naturally decaying organic matter. Common pollutants associated with polluted waterbodies include sediments, heavy metals, toxic chemicals, nutrients, fecal coliform bacteria, and oil and grease.

Many waterbodies have good water quality, but about 40 percent of the lakes, ponds, rivers, wetlands, and coastal waters in this nation are listed as impaired waters due to pollution. For nearly 30 years, states have concentrated on industrial and municipal discharges of pollution from point sources such as discharge pipes. Now Massachusetts and other states are expanding efforts and including nonpoint sources—such as stormwater runoff, septic systems, and erosion—to clean up our water, using the watershed approach and a newly rediscovered TMDL provision in the federal Clean Water Act.

What is a TMDL? A total maximum daily load (TMDL) is the greatest amount of a pollutant that a waterbody can accept and still meet water quality standards for protecting public health and maintaining the designated beneficial uses of those waters for drinking, swimming, recreation, and fishing. A TMDL is implemented by specifying how much of that pollutant can come from point, nonpoint, and natural sources. The TMDL provisions require states to identify and list waterbodies that are threatened or not meeting water quality standards despite controls on point source discharges.

- TMDL Strategy - Key Steps

**Identification of
impaired waterbodies that
need TMDLs**

**Priority ranking of
impaired waterbodies**

TMDL development

**Implementation of
controls to meet water
quality standards**

**Assessment of
effectiveness of control
measures**

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has developed a TMDL Strategy that prioritizes all listed waterbodies, establishes TMDLs for degraded waters, and plans for implementation of best management practices (BMPs) to clean up polluted waterbodies. The TMDL requires coordination with existing and proposed regulations and programs, such as NPDES permits for point source control and the stormwater management performance standards administered by conservation commissions under the Wetlands Protection Act. In addition, funding priority for Section 319 grants and SRF loans will be given to watershed cleanup projects that advance TMDL program requirements.

DEP is integrating the Massachusetts TMDL Strategy into the state's Watershed Initiative and the associated five-year planning and permitting cycle. Surveys of water quality and aquatic life, conducted on a rotating basis within Massachusetts river basins, support DEP in its development of the 303(d) list of impaired waterbodies. Going forward, watershed teams, volunteers, and the public will help prioritize listed waters for TMDL development. Consideration will be given to the severity of pollution, the beneficial uses of waterbodies, and the availability of acceptable methods to correct pollution problems.

DEP must develop approximately 1,500 TMDLs by 2012. Following the TMDL requirements, DEP will allocate pollutant loads equitably to contributing point and nonpoint sources. Computer modeling may be used to consider pollution allocation alternatives that are feasible and cost-effective. In addition, naturally occurring pollution sources and seasonal variations will be taken into consideration, and a margin of safety will be included to ensure that water quality standards are within reach. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) also requires an implementation plan with control measures for each TMDL. Using watershed management plans, voluntary actions, and commitments for best management practices to restore water quality, DEP will fulfill these EPA requirements. Assessment and monitoring of the control measures' effectiveness will complete the TMDL Strategy.

How can you get involved? DEP encourages public input and volunteer participation throughout the TMDL process. Local support is needed to develop recommendations and obtain funding. Public involvement is sought during waterbody assessments and as the 303(d) list is revised. The 303(d) process occurs every two years, beginning in 2000. At that time, public input also will be solicited to set priorities for TMDL development. As each TMDL is developed, there is a comment period on the draft TMDL Report in order to involve the public in implementation planning. In addition, a meeting to receive public comments may be scheduled.

TMDL Resources

CONTACTS

To learn more about participating in the TMDL development process, contact:

The DEP Division of Watershed Management at 508-792-7470.

The watershed office at the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA), 617/626-1000, for the name and phone number of the watershed team leader in your area.

The Massachusetts Watershed Coalition for information on river and watershed protection groups. They can be reached at 978-534-0379.

The DEP Service Centers: Northeast: 978-661-7677, Southeast: 508-946-2714, Central: 508-792-7683, Western: 413-755-2124.

WEB SITES

EOEA Watershed Teams

www.state.ma.us/envir/watershd.htm

EOEA Grant Programs

www.state.ma.us/czm/cprgp.htm

www.state.ma.us/dem/grants.htm

www.agmconnect.org/maenvtr2.htm

Massachusetts Watershed Coalition

www.ma.ultranet.com/~mwc

DEP Watershed Management

www.state.ma.us/dep/brp/wm/wmpubs.htm

US EPA

www.epa.gov/OWOW/tmdl

GRANTS & LOANS

DEP's grant and loan programs consist of federal funds from EPA as authorized by the Clean Water Act (**Sections 604B, 104(b)(3) and 319**). These include the state bond funds for research and demonstration, state loan programs for municipalities (**Clean Water and Drinking Water state revolving funds (CWSRF and DWSRF)**), and homeowners (**Community Septic Management Program**). Updates, schedules, eligibility requirements, and program information are available at DEP's web site: www.state.ma.us/dep/brp/wm/wmpubs/htm or contact the DEP Regional Service Center in your area.

Funding programs also are available from Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management (CZM) and the Department of Environmental Management (DEM). Visit the web sites of these agencies for information.



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